



March 6, 2015

Needle Discoloration on Idaho Ponderosa Pine

Observations

- Damage was first reported in December. Last season's needles (2014 needles) are yellow from the tips to mid-needle or more, while the bases of the needles are still green. The yellowing progresses from the needle tip toward the base.
- Terminal buds are still alive indicating that the 2015 needles will flush this spring.
- Damage is only on ponderosa pine.
- Needle damage has been observed in the Cavendish area (Clearwater Valley), Gifford (north of Craigmont), Kamiah, Kooskia, Lenore, Moscow, Deary, Kendrick, Plummer, Coeur d'Alene, Rathdrum and in the Spokane and Deer Park areas of Washington.
- Needle damage **has not** been observed in the Sandpoint, Bonners Ferry or Craig Mountain areas (near Soldier's Meadow Reservoir).
- There seems to be an elevational gradient, where the damage is more apparent between approximately 1,500 and 4,000 feet. Some affected trees were observed along the Clearwater River, but became more common as the elevation increased. The damage was not observed on ponderosa pine near Soldier's Meadow Reservoir (approximately 4,500 feet).

Recommendations

- **DO NOT** assume that the tree has been attacked by bark beetles and cut the tree down.
- Inspect the tree for signs of bark beetles. Look for pitch tubes and beetle galleries under the bark. The phloem (inner bark) of these trees will be brown and is usually dry.
- Wait until June to observe new needles flush or decide if the tree has been killed.
- Contact your Private Forestry Specialist or Tom Eckberg, IDL Forest Health Specialist at 208-666-8625, teckberg@idl.idaho.gov.